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ABSTRACT

This booklet for parents of children not yet old enough to attend kindergarten is first in a series of five on educational opportunities in Virginia. It includes information about children from birth to 5 years of age and gives suggestions for parents on helping children develop. The booklet also provides facts about education programs in Virginia. Among the topics included are the following: (1) child development; (2) child-rearing methods; (3) where to get help if concerns or problems arise; (4) how to choose quality child care; (5) preschool education programs and how to select them; (6) how to prepare children to enter public school; and (7) public education in Virginia. Parents are encouraged to review the contents of the booklet, become acquainted with the information it contains, and then read carefully those sections related to their child's stage of development. They are encouraged to use the booklet as a guide for rearing and educating their child throughout the preschool years. (RH)

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ABOUT THE PRESCHOOL YEARS

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN VIRGINIA, BOOK 1

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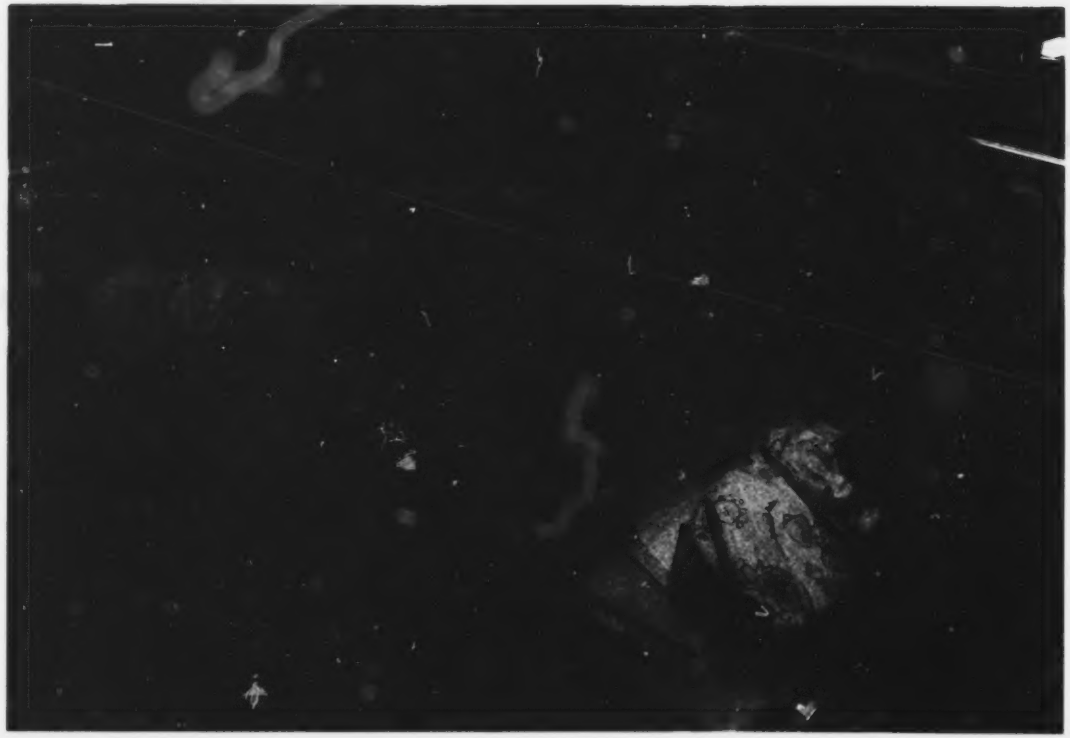
WHY THIS BOOKLET?

As the parent of a new baby, you are beginning the important task of rearing your child to become a healthy, happy, successful person. Because new parents usually have many questions about how to best accomplish this, you may have already begun to read about how to care for your baby. Most information given to parents of infants is about the physical development and health needs of young children. *About the Preschool Years,* however, focuses upon the role of parents in children's intellectual, social and emotional development as well as their physical development during the first five years of life. It has been written to help you make these years as successful as possible.

WHAT IS IN THIS BOOKLET?

About the Preschool Years, Book 1 is part of a series of five Educational Opportunities in Virginia publications. It includes information about children from birth to age five and suggestions parents may use to help children develop. It also provides facts about education programs in Virginia. Among the topics included are the following:

- Child development
- Child-rearing methods
- Where to get help if concerns or problems arise
- How to choose quality child care
- Preschool education programs and how to select them
- How to prepare children to enter public school
- Public education in Virginia



HOW SHOULD PARENTS USE THIS BOOKLET?

Parents are encouraged to review the contents of this booklet, become acquainted with the many types of information it contains, and then read carefully those sections related to your child's stage of development. Keep *About the Preschool Years, Book 1* to use as a guide for rearing and educating your child throughout the preschool years.

If you have questions or want further information about topics discussed in this booklet, please contact your child's physician, a family guidance clinic in your community, or any of the service agencies listed in this booklet. If your child is enrolled in a preschool education program when he or she is older, you may ask the teacher for additional information or sources of help. Lastly, the librarian at your local public library can help you locate other books, magazines, and pamphlets which are of value to parents in rearing their children.

ABOUT THE PRESCHOOL YEARS

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN VIRGINIA, BOOK 1

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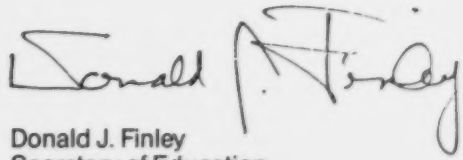

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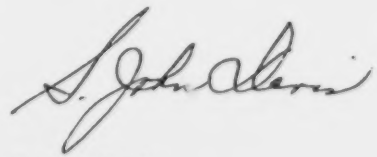

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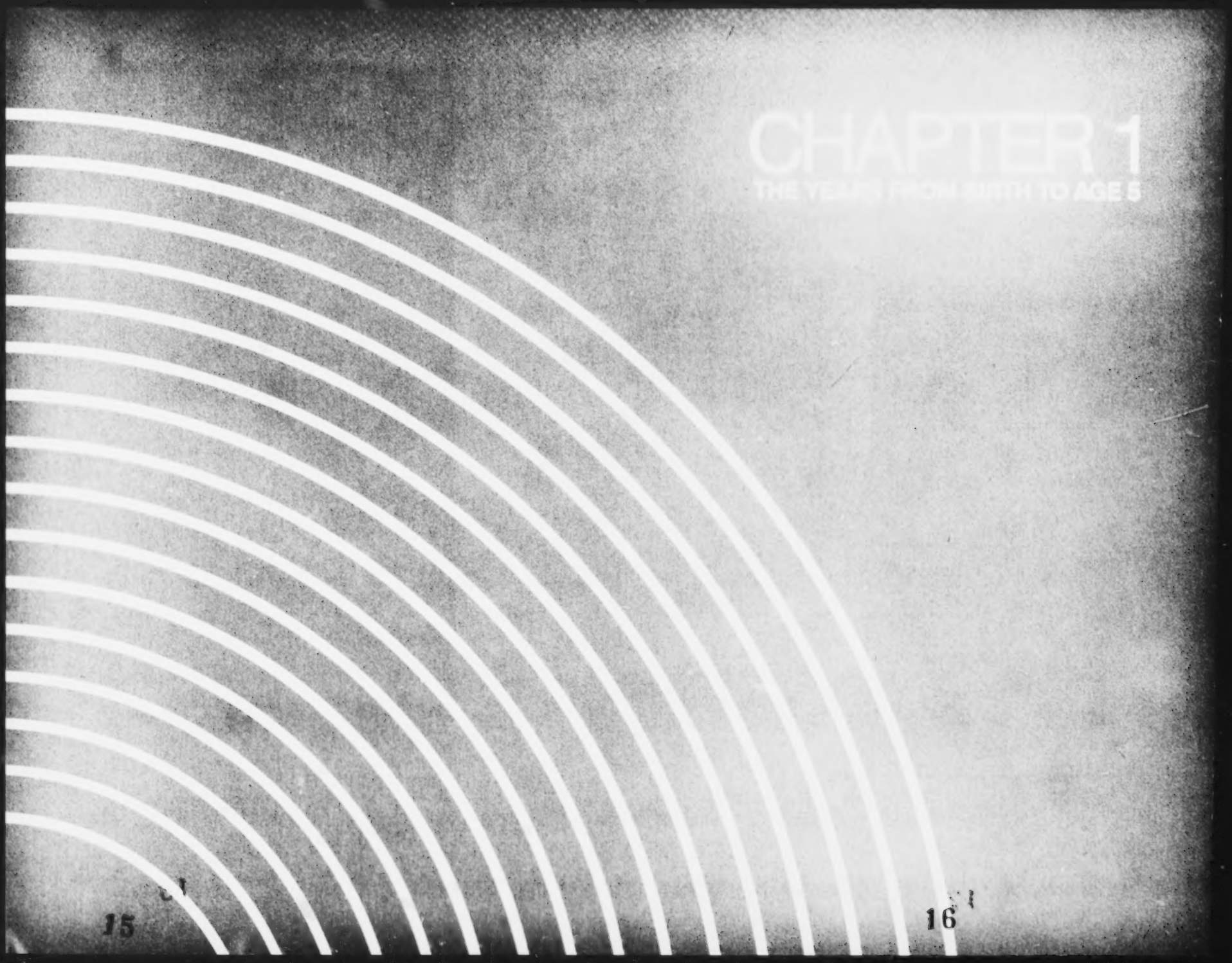
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NEW FEELINGS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The first five years of life are the most critical period in children's development. During these years the basic foundations for intellectual development and competency are established. During this same period children form beliefs, attitudes, and patterns of behavior and reach conclusions about themselves and their world which tend to be lasting.

Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Throughout the growing up years, parents' attitudes and expectations, the type of home life they provide, and the child-rearing methods they use deeply affect their children's development. Children are influenced by what their parents say and do, as well as by what they do *not* say and do, in rearing them.

Child rearing is one of the most significant and challenging tasks adults undertake. Most adults, however, have not had any formal training for rearing children. Loving children is not enough. Parents also need knowledge and skills to rear children effectively. They need to know about the development of children and child-rearing methods which best help children learn and grow. The following sections of this booklet provide extensive information about children's needs and development and suggestions about effective child-rearing techniques.

CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Each baby has his or her own unique personality and qualities. Some infants like to be cuddled more than others; some cry frequently and demand much attention; some are very active, while others are more quiet and relaxed. Despite these differences, all children have certain ongoing needs. Parents must be sure that the following needs are adequately met so that children may experience healthy development.

A Need for Security Children need to develop a sense of security—the belief that their world is predictable and their parents can be depended upon and trusted.

A Need for Love Children of all ages need love and affection from their parents.

A Need for Understanding and Acceptance Children need to feel that parents understand and accept them as unique individuals.

A Need for Competency, Responsibility, and Independence Beginning in the earliest years of life, children need to learn gradually to become competent and responsible for themselves and their own actions.

A Need for Success Closely related to children's need for competency is their need for success. Being successful most of the time in what they undertake helps children develop good self-esteem, confidence, and motivation to learn.

A Need for Discipline Children need parental discipline, suitable to their level of understanding and development, which allows both parents and children to maintain their dignity and self-respect.

A Need for Respect While it is important for children to show respect for parents, it is equally important for parents to respect their children.

HOW CHILDREN GROW AND DEVELOP

As children grow, they follow a predictable pattern of development and go through a series of developmental stages which are related to their ages. Thus, children of similar ages behave in similar ways and have certain similar characteristics and needs. Some children may enter a stage of development earlier or later than other children of the same age, but no stage may be skipped.

Although at each of the developmental stages children and their parents are faced with new and different demands, some of these stages are more difficult than others. Knowing in advance what children are like during each stage helps parents to better understand their children and use suitable methods to help them learn and grow.

WHAT ARE CHILDREN LIKE FROM BIRTH TO AGE TWO?

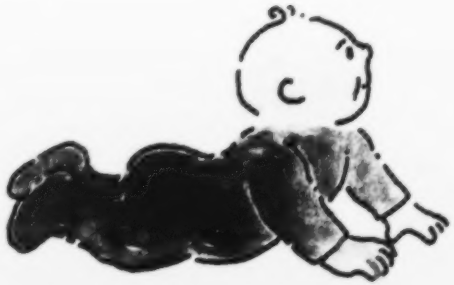
The first two years of life are known as infancy. During this period babies change from totally dependent infants to running, climbing, talking, exploring toddlers who want to do things for themselves. They grow in many ways, begin to think about their world, form relationships, and learn how to get along with others. Their healthy development is largely determined by the kind of care and attention they receive and the experiences they have.

How Infants Develop Physically

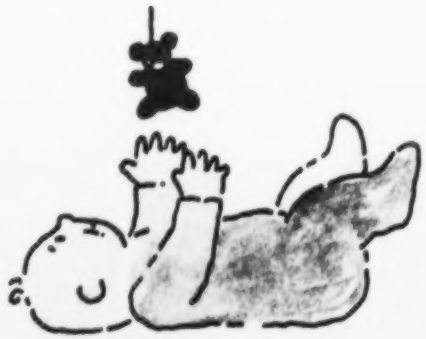
Some of the more important milestones in infants' physical devlopment are increases in height and weight, learning to sit up and move from place to place, and holding and using objects. Because infants vary in the rates at which they develop, the ages in the following chart should be used only as a general guide.

Infants' Physical Development

1 Month Hold chin up



2 Months Hold chest up



3 Months Reach toward object

4 Months Sit with support; double birth weight

5 Months Sit on lap; grasp objects; turn from stomach to back and then back to stomach

6 Months Sit in high chair; grasp objects with thumb and four fingers; roll over

7 Months Sit alone; try to creep

8 Months Stand with help; creep

9 Months When helped, stand holding furniture; need help to sit down again

11 Months Walk when led

12 Months Pull up to stand beside furniture; take some steps; hold object with thumb and two fingers; tripled birth weight

15 Months Walk alone

18 Months Walk up stairs with help; crawl up and down stairs alone

24 Months Walk up and downstairs alone; quadrupled their birth weight; average height is 32 to 36 inches

How Infants Develop Socially and Emotionally

Healthy social and emotional growth must begin at birth. During infancy children need to learn that they can trust and depend on those who care for them. Trust is encouraged by consistency in the love, physical care, daily routines, and other experiences parents provide.

Infants also must develop good feelings about themselves. This is accomplished by their forming close attachments to loving, understanding adults who care for them and meet their needs. By six months of age infants need to have made one or more attachments. Developing trust and forming these early attachments are essential for children's good mental health and affect their future social and emotional development and behavior.

Infants' Social and Emotional Development

Birth to 1 Month

Look at faces
Watch and respond to activities around them
Imitate facial expressions of adults and begin to respond to them
Generally become calm when picked up, cuddled, or fed

1 to 3 Months

Begin to smile at around six weeks
Use smiles and gurgles to get responses
Prefer people to objects

3 to 6 Months

Begin to laugh, show emotions, and enjoy play
Coo and smile at objects as well as people
Cry in response to unpleasantness
Anticipate and show interest in being picked up

7 to 9 Months

Develop interest in social games, such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake
Sometimes react to strangers by screaming and crying
Approach new situations and people with caution
Become interested in other infants; touch them and babble to them
Consistently show emotions
Shout to get attention

9 to 12 Months

Are strongly attached to parent or person who usually provides care
May show possessiveness of parent by clinging or pushing others away
Have increased fear of strangers
Clearly communicate feelings and emotions
Act socially toward other children by offering or taking away a toy
Participate in pat-a-cake and so-big games
Repeat a behavior when laughed at
Show affection by pats and hugs
Obey simple commands

12 to 18 Months

Are deeply attached to parent or person who usually provides care
Become increasingly curious and want to explore surroundings
Are able to give and receive toys
Enjoy chasing, hiding, and other games
Play beside other children, but do not play with them

18 to 24 Months

Anticipate expressions of love and return them
Recognize self in mirror
Show intense likes and dislikes
May have strong attachment to a particular toy or blanket
Want needs to be met immediately
May have tantrums
Are easily distracted and entertained by others
Alternate between wanting to be close to and independent of parents
Understand ownership of own possessions

Crying

By crying babies let parents know what they need. Parents quickly learn the difference between a "hungry" cry, a "wet" cry, or a "sick" cry. Sometimes babies cry at the same time each day for no apparent physical reason. The cause of these fretful periods is unknown, but by about three months of age this fretfulness usually disappears.

Parents generally feel frustrated and upset when they cannot soothe a baby who is crying. In trying to comfort a crying infant, parents may find it helpful to hold or walk the baby, or sing or talk softly to him or her. In some cases, laying the baby on his or her stomach across your lap and gently stroking the baby's back has a calming effect. Sometimes, holding your baby close to you and breathing deeply and slowly so that you relax also soothes the baby.

Younger infants usually cry because of physical discomfort. As they grow older, their crying is usually due to hunger or fatigue. Older infants also cry when they are bored or are left alone.

How Parents Can Help Infants Grow Socially and Emotionally

For healthy social and emotional development, infants need a warm, caring adult who will feed, comfort, and provide companionship to them. The following suggestions will help you guide your baby's social and emotional growth:

Hold, Touch, and Cuddle Your Infant When parents hold, touch, and cuddle their infants regularly, they convey their love and protective feelings and help their babies develop a sense of security.

Look at Your Baby With Love Infants need admiring, loving glances from adults which signal that all is well. Such messages tell them that they are wanted.

Talk to Your Baby Calmly Parents' voices have a powerful effect upon infants. Infants feel good about themselves and their world when they hear caring, gentle voices.

Encourage Independence Babies should be encouraged to do those things that they can do for themselves. For example, when they try to feed themselves, parents should provide nutritious finger foods which may be grasped easily.

Babyproof Your House When infants begin to move around the house, they want to touch almost everything in sight to see what will happen. Thus, parents find themselves constantly saying "No." Covering electric outlets, removing cherished items, and installing gates on stairways are good beginnings for ensuring babies' safety and avoiding frequent conflicts. Despite all such precautions, however, parents need to watch infants very carefully.

Meet Your Baby's Needs Promptly No matter what the cause, no baby should be left to cry unattended for long periods of time. The more promptly the cry is taken care of and the more appropriately the baby's needs are met during the first months of life, the less likely it is that the baby will use crying later as a means of communication.

How Infants Develop Intellectually

Infants learn through their experiences and surroundings. They need stimulating activities and interesting things to see, hear, touch, smell, and taste.

Infants' Intellectual Development

Birth to 1 Month

Look at colorful objects and parents' faces
Practice sucking, looking, grasping, and crying

1 to 4 Months

Accidently discover what their bodies can do; for example, sucking thumb, making fist
Follow moving object with eyes
Move head in direction of sounds
Repeat newly learned behavior, such as cooing and touching tongue to lips
Are aware only of the present and what they see, feel, hear, smell, and taste

4 to 8 Months

Try to make interesting sights and sounds last by repeating them, such as kicking to make a mobile move
Grasp reachable objects
Recognize difference between self and objects

8 to 12 Months

Intentionally try to make things happen, such as banging to make noise
Begin to recognize that objects can be used to cause things to happen. For example, banging pot lids together makes noise
Anticipate events; for example when mother gets car keys, she is leaving
Look at object, reach for it, grasp it, and put it in mouth
Search for hidden objects, such as looking for a toy when they see it being hidden

12 to 18 Months

Try new ways to do things, such as reaching a toy by pulling its string, moving the rug, or moving themselves
Imitate behavior of others
Use trial and error method to learn

18 to 24 Months

Picture ideas, objects, and events in their minds
Think about and solve simple problems
Imitate behavior seen days or even weeks earlier, such as mother or father cooking or reading
Begin to understand consequences of their behavior

Language Learning to speak and understand what others say is an important part of intellectual development. This process begins in the earliest days of infancy when their parents talk to them. Young babies listen to their parents' words, begin to experiment with sounds, and try to repeat words they hear by cooing and babbling. Between six to nine months of age, they begin to name objects and imitate what they hear.

Play Infants' play contributes not only to their intellectual and language development but also to their social, emotional, and physical growth. They need parents to play with them and toys that stimulate them. Infants like toys of bright colors and different textures. They respond best to red and then to yellow, blue, and green.

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How Parents Can Help Their Infants' Intellectual And Language Development

Parents can do many things to help the intellectual and language development of their babies. Most important of all, parents should talk and read to them and give them opportunities to play, to be with other people, and to explore their surroundings. These experiences help infants form the concepts needed for intellectual and language development.

Birth to 6 Months: Infants need and like sensory stimulation.

- Talk, sing, and read to your baby, regardless of his or her limited ability to respond.
- Use decorated crib sheets.
- Encourage babbling by repeating your baby's coos and gurgles.
- Give your baby safe objects, such as multicolored rattles or soft toys, to explore with their mouths.
- Provide toys of different textures, shapes, and colors as well as toys which make sounds.
- Let your baby hear the voices of different people.
- Paint the walls of the baby's room a bright color, and hang colorful pictures, mobiles, and an unbreakable mirror where the baby can easily see them.
- Read to your baby regularly.
- Use your baby's name when you talk to him or her.

6 to 12 Months: Infants need and like to explore their surroundings.

- Talk, read, and sing to your baby.
- Let your baby play with safe household objects, such as milk cartons, empty plastic containers, and pie pans.
- Encourage your baby to put things in and take things out of containers. For example, soft blocks may be dropped into an empty ice cream container and then removed.
- Provide toys which can be put together and taken apart.
- Praise and respond to your baby's sounds that stand for certain objects; these sounds are forms of early words.
- Partially hide a toy while your baby watches; then encourage him or her to find it.
- Teach your baby words for body parts, foods, and other familiar materials by naming these items as you use them with him or her.
- Encourage imitation by providing an unbreakable mirror so your baby can see himself or herself.
- Place your baby where he or she can be with and watch other children and adults and observe many types of activities.
- Play games, such as this little piggy and pat-a-cake, with your baby.
- Change the pictures or designs on your baby's walls periodically.

1 to 2 Years: Infants need and like to be busy and active.

- Encourage your baby to explore his or her surroundings.
- Talk, read, and sing to your baby.
- Encourage your baby to imitate you in play activities, such as stacking rings on a peg or sorting objects by shape.
- Provide simple one-or two-piece puzzles with knobs.
- Continue to provide interesting new materials to play with and see.
- Give your baby opportunities to be with other children.

Toys for Infants Because toys are children's learning tools, they should be selected carefully. Good toys need not cost much and can be made from common household objects. Infants learn from and enjoy toys such as the following:

Birth to One Year

Soft cloth and rubber toys
Floating bath toys
Nesting and stacking toys
Musical mobile
Cloth books
Crib activity centers
Take-apart toys

One to Two Years

Pull and push toys
Large riding toys
Small rocking chair
Large beads, crayons, and paper
Building and sorting toys
Water and sand toys
Cuddly dolls and soft animals
Toy cars and telephones

Parents should avoid giving infants toys that do not meet safety standards and balloons that can stick in their throats and choke them. Parents should be sure that toys do not have any sharp points, edges, nails, wires, or pins, are too large to be swallowed, and have no parts which might lodge in the child's ears or nose. Parents also should check to see that the toys are painted with nontoxic or lead-free paint, do not require electricity, have no parts which can pinch fingers or catch hair, and can be easily cleaned. Furthermore, the cords on crib toys should be shorter than 12 inches to avoid the possibility of strangulation. If a toy chest is used for keeping toys, the lid should have a safety feature that prevents it from falling on the child and causing injury.

Reading to Infants Developing a love for books begins early in infancy. Children whose parents begin reading to them regularly during infancy usually develop a strong desire to learn to read when they are older.

When infants are just a couple of months old, parents should read to them daily. Holding your baby on your lap, use simple picture books with bright colors. As you read, point to and name the objects in the pictures. You may even talk about the pictures. Infants especially like to look at pictures of animals and delight in hearing imitations of animal sounds. By about six months, they start to point to pictures in books when parents ask, "Where's the bunny?" or say, "Show me the baby." By about one year of age, infants begin to look at books on their own, turning the pages themselves. "Reading" pictures is a favorite and valuable pastime for them.

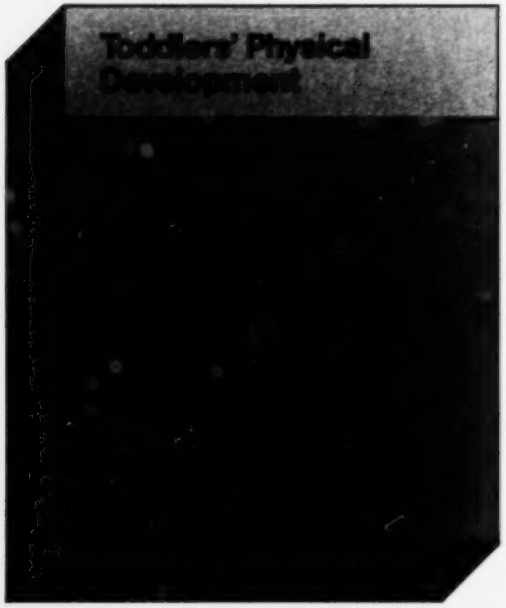
Books for infants should be made of cloth or heavy cardboard and should contain large, clear pictures of single objects, with only one picture on a page. The stories should be about babies, people, or familiar animals in situations they can relate to their own experiences.

WHAT ARE CHILDREN LIKE FROM AGES TWO TO THREE?

The stage from ages two to three is a period of many changes and can be somewhat difficult for toddlers and their parents. Toddlers are highly inquisitive and very active. They are determined to be independent, to do things for themselves, and to make things happen. In addition, they tend to have frequent changes in mood. Because toddlers are into everything, they need constant supervision for their own safety. Although living with a two year old is a challenge, this stage is especially important in children's development. It is a time when they must learn to become more competent and independent.

How Toddlers Develop Physically

The average two year old is between 32 and 36 inches tall and weighs 23 to 30 pounds. Physical growth slows during this third year of life, but their large body muscles develop rapidly. As a result, toddlers' motor control, coordination, and balance improve, and they are constantly running, climbing, and jumping. Small muscles also develop during this period, and children become more skillful in using their hands. Because their rate of growth is slower, they need less food. Thus, many toddlers become fussy eaters and prefer to play with their food rather than eat it.



Toddlers enjoy the new control they have over their bodies and use their bodies to express their feelings. For example, they jump and chuckle when they are happy, and kick and scream when they are unhappy. Because of their improved fine motor skills, they now can hold a cup with one hand, string beads, and stack objects. Two year olds are not skilled at dressing but they are skilled at undressing, particularly at untying their shoes and taking off their socks. They also begin to use the toilet alone.

How Toddlers Develop Socially and Emotionally

Two to three year olds seek more independence from adults and show greater interest in children their own ages. They demand to do things for themselves, and "No" or "Me do it" are typical responses of this age group. These responses make them appear stubborn, willful, and defiant. In reality, they are simply trying to figure out who they are and accomplish the important task of becoming more competent and independent.

At the same time toddlers are faced with new expectations on the part of their parents. When they were infants, their parents promptly and patiently responded to their needs and adjusted their own schedules to accommodate their babies. With toddlers, however, parents' behavior changes. They often ask toddlers to wait and tell them not to do certain things. Suddenly, toddlers' needs are not being met as promptly as they were during infancy. Thus, conflicts arise, and toddlers respond to their parents' demands with a resounding "No." They may cry, have temper tantrums, or run away from such conflicts. It is important for parents to understand that the trying behavior of two year olds is a normal and necessary part of their development and will eventually pass.

How Parents Can Help Toddlers Grow Socially and Emotionally

During this stage of development it is crucial for children to develop a sense of identity and of social relationships as well as to become more competent and independent. Because of their negativism and their desire to do things in their own way, this is a trying period for them and their parents. How, then, can parents encourage appropriate behavior by toddlers without having every clash of wills turn into tears and tantrums?

Parents can help toddlers learn to behave properly by setting reasonable limits for their behavior and seeing that these limits are observed consistently. Parents should take time to show children the desired behavior and to explain calmly and simply what they can and cannot do. Parents' attitudes toward their children are important, and they should provide encouragement and understanding, rather than harsh discipline, to help children learn how to behave.

Discipline should be suitable to toddlers' development and understanding. Having a few, consistent rules encourages desirable behavior. Trying to reason with them usually does not work; nor do they respond well to direct commands. They respond best to fun and humor. The following techniques are useful with toddlers:

- Give short and simple reasons for your rules. If explaining these rules does not bring about the desired behavior, pick toddlers up and calmly remove them from the situation.

- Use positive statements as much as possible. Help children maintain their self-respect by saying to them, "I would be happy if . . . ," or "It would be helpful to . . . ," rather than saying "Don't you ever . . ."
- Limit toddlers to choosing from only two options at a time. Each of these, of course, should be equally acceptable to the parent offering the choices.
- Avoid situations which you know will cause your toddler to feel frustrated. Toddlers do not understand why they have to cooperate rather than having their wishes granted right away.
- Avoid harsh punishment; it usually leads to fear, anxiety, or a display of temper.
- Be patient with toddlers. In learning to be self-sufficient, they often do things that frustrate parents.

Moving from the safety of infancy toward the greater freedom of the preschool years can be a difficult and frightening time for toddlers. Parents can help them by accepting them as unique individuals, loving them, and giving them the tools with which to grow in their own way and at their own rate. The guidance parents provide for them at this age provides the foundation for their future development. Firm, loving, and consistent guidance leads toddlers toward greater independence and self-control.

Toddlerproof Your House A safe environment is essential for keeping toddlers safe and helping them learn self-discipline. Parents should make sure that all tall or unstable furniture is secure, that safety gates are used on stairways, and that stairs are carpeted. All medicines and cleaning supplies should be kept out of the reach of children, and windows should be protected with screens. If possible, have a fenced-in area in your yard where children may play, and provide child-sized, safe playground equipment. Above all, do *not* leave toddlers unattended.

How Toddlers Develop Intellectually

Intellectual growth in toddlers is rapid. Two year olds can recall and anticipate certain events they have experienced before. For example, toddlers not only ask for cookies but also can remember where the cookies are kept. This skill marks the beginning of memory.

Toddlers are able to engage in imaginative play during which they act out their own ideas about objects and events without much regard for reality. What they think about their world depends upon the experiences they have. These early concepts about their world are the basis upon which later concepts are formed.

Language By the age of two, most children understand approximately 300 words. From two to three years of age, they learn new words and grammatical forms at an astounding rate. They enjoy language for its rhythm and like to hear the same stories over and over again, more for the rhythm than the content. They also enjoy looking at books and magazines and naming familiar objects they see in pictures.

Play Toddlers spend most of their day learning about their world through play. Play helps them develop language and motor skills, self-assurance, and trust in themselves. It also enables them to experience the joy of accomplishment. In their play, toddlers learn by imitating adult roles and activities, such as cooking, feeding, or talking on the telephone. This pretend play helps them better understand themselves, their family, and the roles and responsibilities of others. Toddlers also learn in their play by investigating and experimenting with a variety of toys and materials.

Toddlers do not yet have the skills for playing with other children and prefer to play by themselves. They are, however, curious about other children and like to be near them while playing. Toddlers can play beside each other for long periods of time and be unconcerned about what the others are doing. Because they have difficulty sharing their possessions, they generally bite or scream at other children who try to take something they consider their own.

How Parents Can Help Their Toddlers' Intellectual and Language Development

Activities such as the following are helpful to toddlers' intellectual and language development:

- Provide toddlers with interesting and safe toys, objects, and activities.
- Because children learn by doing, let toddlers do things for themselves whenever possible.
- Introduce new toys, materials, and experiences gradually. Overstimulating toddlers with many new things at the same time bewilders them.
- Talk with your toddlers and listen to them, too. Explain in simple words how toys and other objects work and why events happen.
- Repeat and expand upon what toddlers say. For example, "Me want," could be expanded to "Yes, you want your teddy bear."
- Ask questions which require more than a yes or no answer.
- Use many concept words and descriptions in talking with them.
- Encourage toddlers to use familiar objects in new ways. This helps them form concepts about what these objects can do and encourages creativity.
- Encourage toddlers to learn by telling them when they do things right.

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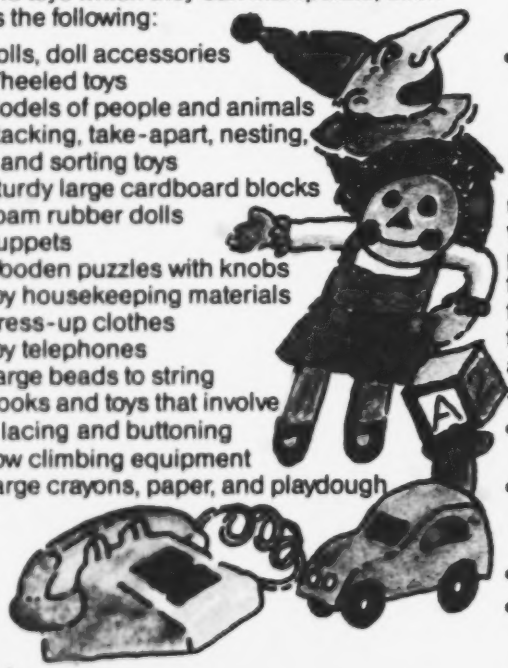
Toys For Toddlers Safety and variety are important considerations in selecting toys for toddlers. Toddlers learn from and enjoy toys which can be used in pretending and toys which they can manipulate, such as the following:

Dolls, doll accessories
Wheeled toys
Models of people and animals
Stacking, take-apart, nesting, and sorting toys
Sturdy large cardboard blocks
Foam rubber dolls
Puppets
Wooden puzzles with knobs
Toy housekeeping materials
Dress-up clothes
Toy telephones
Large beads to string
Books and toys that involve lacing and buttoning
Low climbing equipment
Large crayons, paper, and playdough



How Parents Can Guide Toddlers' Play
The following are suggestions parents may use in guiding their toddlers' play:

- Provide many opportunities for toddlers to imitate through play what they see in their world. Support their attempts to experiment verbally, to try out a variety of toys and materials, and to express their feelings through the use of toys and play materials.
- Do *not* leave toddlers unattended while they are playing
- When you wish to have toddlers share toys, have a substitute toy ready to place in their hands immediately.
- Play simple games with them, such as rolling balls, hide and seek, and bean bag toss. Avoid games with rules.

Reading to Toddlers Parents should read to toddlers often. Toddlers enjoy books which have pictures of animals, babies, and people. They especially like books with textured pictures to touch and smell. Reading to toddlers helps them feel secure, improves their concept and language development, and helps them become aware of simple story sequences.

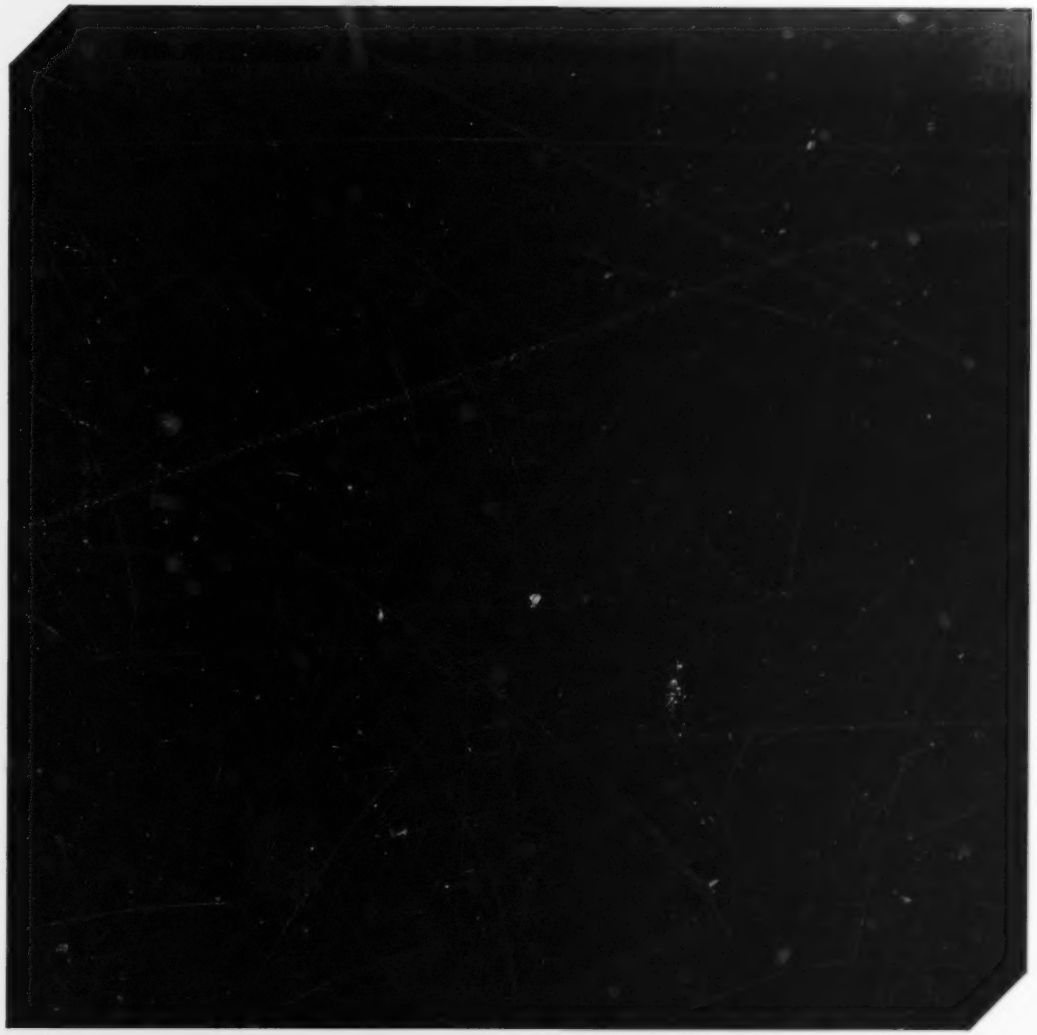
- Choose a time when your toddler is calm and can pay attention.
- Sit close to your toddler so he or she can look at the book with you and feel your closeness.
- Be enthusiastic about what you are reading.
- Point to the pictures and name the objects in them. Also, imitate the sounds of animals, objects, or people in the pictures.
- Encourage your toddler to turn pages, to ask questions, and to talk about the pictures and the story. Help him or her to interpret the actions in the pictures.
- Select books for your toddler that have colorful, simple, realistic pictures of familiar objects, animals, or people, usually one picture to a page. The story should be about events children can relate to their own experiences and should have good rhythm and rhymes. The pages should be made of cloth or heavy cardboard so toddlers can easily turn them.

WHAT ARE CHILDREN LIKE FROM AGES THREE TO FIVE?

During the preschool stage of development, ages three to five, children change in many important ways. Their height increases by about two or three inches each year and their weight by about four to six pounds each year. They show improved motor skills and make great strides in language development. Preschool children also become more independent and begin to show less attachment to their parents. They engage in more complex play activities, are very curious, and want to explore the world outside their familiar surroundings.

How Preschoolers Develop Physically

Physical development during this period is steady. Preschoolers are usually very active and are gaining better control over their arms, hands, and legs. They learn to hop, throw, and catch and enjoy practicing these skills. Preschoolers also are learning such skills as buckling, snapping, buttoning, zipping, cutting, and coloring. Mastering these involves a great deal of work and practice, but preschoolers enjoy the challenge.



How Preschoolers Develop Socially and Emotionally

During the years from three to five, children begin to spend more time with people outside their own family. They have a strong need to be with and to be accepted by other children and often become very attached to their playmates.

Preschoolers are generally happy, curious, and full of imagination. They are pleased with their own ability to plan and complete projects which are primarily carried out in imaginative play activities. Preschool children like new experiences and want to know more about other people, what they do, and what they themselves are capable of doing. They spend much time "trying on" adult roles they have seen.

Children of these ages move back and forth between their need to be independent and their need for dependence. They become easily frustrated, cannot tolerate waiting, and frequently cry when things do not go their way.

Many children become fearful during this stage of development. This is especially true of children who are three and a half and four years old. Typically, they fear the dark, animals, ridicule, or potentially dangerous situations such as fire or deep water. If children develop such fears, parents should respond with understanding and reassure children of their safety. By the age of five most children outgrow these fears.

How Parents Can Help Preschoolers Grow Socially and Emotionally

Healthy social and emotional development during this preschool stage requires that children learn to be more self-disciplined, competent, and self-reliant. It also requires their learning to make choices and decisions. Accomplishing these important tasks helps preschoolers believe in themselves and their own abilities and become increasingly independent and responsible.

Choices and Decisions Learning to make choices and decisions while they are young prepares children for the more difficult decisions they must make when they are older. It also helps them become less dependent upon adults. Parents can begin to teach their children how to make choices and decisions by providing frequent opportunities for them to choose or decide about simple matters, such as play activities, food,

Preschoolers' Social and Emotional Development

3 Years

Cooperate and like to please adults
Have occasional short temper tantrums
Can be jealous of younger brothers or sisters
Look to their parents for security, recognition, and encouragement
Cooperate in play with two or three children
Take turns, share, and use language to settle disagreements
Try to follow directions, and respond to adult approval and disapproval
Show an interest in family activities and household responsibilities
Sometimes want to be a baby again and may act like a baby
Accept suggestions
Establish social contacts with adults other than parents
Test limits set by parents

4 Years

Are proud of what they can do; often are assertive and boastful
Prefer their own age mates
Taste limits set by parents
Are not concerned about others' feelings
May become very silly and bossy
Seek attention by showing off and making up stories
Express displeasure loudly or through aggression
Are able to tolerate some frustration
Develop a sense of humor and use riddles, jokes, and nonsense words
Show balance between independence and sociability

5 Years

Are more self-sufficient and have better social skills
Prefer their own peers as playmates; may have one or more close friends
Enjoy friends and like to visit them alone
Want to choose their own activities
Are socially outgoing and self-assured
Are eager to go to school because it is a sign of growing up
Are very interested in home activities and like to help
Try very hard to be "good" but cannot always differentiate right from wrong
Usually blame others if trouble arises
Play well in a small group
Cooperate with adults and peers
Recognize the rights of others
Accept adult supervision easily because of desire to conform to rules
Are protective of younger brothers and sisters but are not dependable in taking care of them
Enjoy family trips and outings
Are affectionate, friendly, and talkative with adults; may innocently tell family secrets
Generally feel good about themselves and their world

and clothing. At first, parents should offer them only two clear alternatives at a time. Gradually, children can move to choosing from alternatives which are less clear. In offering choices, parents must be prepared to accept their children's decisions. Parents, therefore, must be sure to limit the options to those which are acceptable to them.

The ease or difficulty children have in learning to make decisions is largely related to their level of maturity, their experiences, and the encouragement and support provided by their parents. Children at any age, however, cannot make good decisions when they are tired, sick, or are under pressure.

Self-discipline Self-discipline means having control of and taking responsibility for one's own behavior. Developing self-discipline is a gradual process for children and requires guidance, patience, encouragement, and realistic expectations by parents. Parents must be careful not to expect more of young children than they are able to handle. At the same time parents must avoid having expectations of children which are not high enough. Parents can best help their children by recognizing that providing consistent guidance, understanding, and affection differs greatly from controlling them by threats and punishment.

The following suggestions can be helpful in encouraging children to become self-disciplined:

- Set firm limits which respect children's need to grow and learn. These limits should be suitable to children's development, abilities, and understanding and should be consistently observed. Setting firm limits and denying a privilege when limits are not observed are methods which help children learn.
- Listen to children and talk with them. Establishing good communication with children is necessary for good parent-child relationships which help children develop self-discipline. One way to give children special attention when you communicate with them is to stoop down and kneel so that you have eye-to-eye contact. This helps promote understanding, especially when children have a limited vocabulary.
- Look for good behavior and praise the behavior and actions you want children to repeat. This is more effective than punishing children for "bad" behavior. Encourage positive behavior by saying simple statements such as, "That game looks good on the shelf" or "I like the way you are eating your cereal." Kind words and praise are as important to children as they are to adults. Sometimes, ignoring undesirable behavior is the most effective way to eliminate it.
- Be clear, calm, and firm in letting your children know what you expect of them, and follow through on what you say. Children need to know that adults mean what they say. Perhaps more than any other suggestion, this one is most important for parents to learn.
- Do *not* use severe punishment. Let children know in advance what will occur each time they behave in an undesirable manner. Then consistently carry out the action each time such behavior occurs. For example, each time your child crosses the street without your permission, you will bring him or her inside the house. Threatening, ridiculing, lecturing, humiliating, and administering harsh physical punishment are ineffective methods for helping children become self-disciplined and are harmful to their social and emotional development.
- When you make a request of children, be sure they understand what you want. If they seem unsure of what you want, repeat or clarify the request, but not in a belittling way. Requests made of children should be reasonable, clear, and simple.
- Provide an environment that gives children enough freedom to try out new activities and social skills in safety. Children who are never allowed to make a mistake or who are punished every time they do something wrong become fearful, overly dependent upon adults, and doubt their own abilities. Young children need to have successful experiences about 80 percent of the time and need encouragement from parents to try new activities and develop new skills.
- Use a positive approach in telling children what to do. When children are always told what they *may not do*, they become defiant. When children are told what they *may do*, many possibilities arise, thus creating a positive attitude and encouraging them to take responsibility for their own actions. Rather than saying "Don't put your clothes on the floor," try saying "Hang your clothes in your closet." Positive statements in-

crease the chances of children acting in desirable ways.

- Model desirable behavior for them. Parents provide a model of behavior through all that they do and say to children. For example, if parents are usually cooperative, show respect, and have a positive attitude toward life, their children are likely to develop similar behavior and attitudes. Parents also should be sure that their words and actions say the same thing. When your actions and words do not support each other, you send children a confusing, double message.
- As often as possible, give children reasons for what you ask them to do.
- Encourage independence by letting preschool children do as much as possible for themselves. It may take longer, but the results are worth it!
- Provide opportunities for preschoolers to have many different play experiences with other children and to be with adults outside their own family.
- Provide an orderly home environment and a routine for living upon which they can depend.
- Give them responsibilities for simple chores which contribute to family living.
- Accept each child as a unique individual and avoid comparisons with other children.
- Help preschoolers learn self-care routines for eating, dressing, toileting, and taking care of their possessions. Allow adequate time for them to complete these tasks.

How Preschoolers Develop Intellectually

From the ages of three to five, children's intellectual abilities develop rapidly. Their thinking is a combination of fantasy and reality, and their understanding is based upon their own limited experiences. Preschoolers focus primarily on what they see in their immediate surroundings and upon present events. They have difficulty with concepts related to the past and the future and are able to think about only one idea at a time. As they become more mature and have more experiences, their thinking will become more objective and realistic.

Preschoolers ask many "why" questions. Although they sometimes do this to get attention, generally their questions are due to their strong need to find out about their world. This process of asking questions and finding out about things helps them learn.

Language Children's vocabulary increases rapidly during this period. Three year olds usually have a vocabulary of 200 to 250 words. By the time they are five, their vocabulary consists of about 2500 words. By the time they reach the age of six, many children have a vocabulary of about 20,000 words and are able to use and understand complex sentences and the rules of grammar. Preschoolers usually understand more words than they actually use in speaking.

Most preschoolers love to talk and are curious about words. Sometimes, however, they use words they do not understand merely for the practice and pleasure new words bring. In doing this, they give the impression that they understand what they are saying. Parents of preschoolers, therefore, must be careful not to assume that their children understand all the words they use.

Preschoolers' Intellectual Development

5 Years

Are curious and factual and love learning
Want to know what objects are for and how to use them
Like humorous stories and stories that are full of action
Like to complete tasks and usually have an idea of what they are going to build or draw
See the difference between reality and fantasy
Increase attention span
Put things in order of size and number
Can remember more than two ideas for a short time
Think about judgments and decisions
Have a keen interest in numbers and counting
Recognize some letters and words
Remember own address
Identify pennies, nickels, and dimes
Ask for information and facts
Hear the differences and similarities in letter sounds
Understand rhyming
Ask serious questions and want honest answers
Remember sequences of numbers and letters

Preschoolers' Language Development

3 Years

Are able to use the words they hear each day; often talk to themselves while eating, playing, or doing other activities
Play with language for fun and practice
Use four or more prepositions, such as on, in, under, behind
Name objects, people, and events in pictures
Say their own full name and the names of the streets where they live
Recite nursery rhymes and poems
Use language easily to tell a story
Express feelings and desires in words
Use longer sentences, plurals, and past tense
Refer to self as "I"

4 Years

Speak clearly in sentences
Talk about everything; tend to ramble
Make up words and laugh at them
Talk to themselves while engaged in various activities
Try out "swear" words without realizing what they mean. (This interest disappears as children approach age five.)
Listen to longer and more varied stories
Ask many "how" and "why" questions
Speak of imaginary conditions, such as "Suppose that" or "I hope ---!"
Tell tall tales and mix truth with make-believe
Use understandable speech but traces of babytalk may sometimes still appear
Use sentences and five word sentences
Give multiple responses in answer to questions
Use words to ask about relationships
Use words to classify objects by shape, color, and size but may not fully understand the concepts involved
"Read" pictures and draw with pencils
Use words to express feelings
Like frequent repetition of sounds and words

5 Years

Show poise and maturity in talking with adults and other children
Ask direct questions and want real answers
Use longer sentences with connectors such as "but" or "because"
Are interested in word meanings; try out new words and can define some simple ones
Spend much time with books; like to hear stories
Name colors, know own age, and understand some abstract words
Understand vocabulary that is mostly concrete, such as nouns and verbs

Play Between the ages of three and five most children live in a world of "let's pretend." Play helps them learn new skills, solve problems, be creative, and learn how to cooperate in a group.

Three year olds are learning to play with others and enjoy learning and using new skills in their play. Their play is simple and unstructured and often includes family themes, such as mommy, daddy, and baby. Real and pretend are not clear to them, so while they are playing, they *become* rather than *pretend* to be the persons they represent. They also change roles quickly in their play and frequently have conflicts over toys.

Three year olds like to collect things. It is not unusual to find them collecting items, carrying them around, and eventually using the items in a pretend play situation. They like to push cars, boats, or other objects in pretend activities. When given interesting materials, they will initiate their own play activities and imitate people and activities they have observed. They also begin to cut with blunt scissors, make simple forms from clay, and use rhythm for marching, clapping, or swaying to music.

Through their play **four year olds** show their growing and clearer sense of who they are and who others are. They frequently exclude others from their play which includes playing roles of people outside the family, such as doctor, dentist, hairstylist, and shoe salesman.

Four year olds like to hide and bury things and play games in which they can hide from adults. They use materials such as blocks, sand, and clay in creative and constructive

ways, but often have ideas which are more complicated than they are able to carry out. Their drawings are simple, have few details, and often are not recognizable to others. They can cut fairly well and like to practice this skill. They also like to play simple games and sometimes will change the rules or leave the game to avoid losing.

An important task for four year olds is to learn to manage their aggressive impulses. This is shown in many play activities such as pretending to be TV super-heroes who attack and/or rescue others. Children of this age need and like costumes and props to make their pretend play more complete and realistic.

Five year olds engage in more organized, cooperative play and act out longer, more complicated play themes than younger preschool children. They like many props and playthings to support their play activities. Some five year olds begin to enjoy playing games which have formal rules.

Children of five like to dramatize every aspect of their world. They have a greater understanding of the differences between pretend and reality and frequently start their play with phrases such as "Let's pretend". They enjoy pretending about real life as well as mythical roles, such as kings, pirates, or cowboys, and add abstract symbols to much of their play, such as using and making paper money to buy food.

Five year olds are able to play comfortably with other children in small groups with relatively little conflict. Favorite activities include building houses, garages, space stations and other elaborate structures with blocks. They use writing and drawing tools freely, and although their drawings are simple, they are usually recognizable to adults. Children this age also enjoy cutting out things from magazines and like to sing, dance, and clap to music.

How Parents Can Help Their Preschoolers' Intellectual And Language Development

The following suggestions are useful for helping preschoolers in their intellectual and language development:

- Preschoolers are interested in plants, animals, household items, foods, tools, toys,

school items, and sports items. Provide a variety of objects such as these to help them learn. Encourage them to examine the characteristics of objects they use and to try using them in different ways.

- Explore the neighborhood and community with preschoolers. Whenever possible, take them to places such as the grocery store, dentist, doctor, library, dry cleaners, pet store, construction sites, and the post office.
- Explore the outdoors with your preschool children. Help them learn about their natural world by encouraging them to look, listen, feel, or smell things that they encounter.
- Take your preschoolers to the library and encourage them to use books.
- Read to them often. Read frequently yourself so they will see reading as an important activity.
- Be good listeners. When parents are good listeners, children know that what they have to say is important and will use language more. Have children talk about their play, their school day, and other topics of interest to them.
- Talk with your children. Plan some interesting and exciting activities to talk about.
- Encourage them to describe what they see and hear and help them with words they may need for these descriptions.
- Use correct language yourself.
- When children come up with good ideas, let them know it.
- Encourage children to talk about things they are making or drawing, but do not keep asking them "What is it?"
- Help children put their feelings into words.
- Do not talk down to children; also, avoid using baby talk with them.
- Give short, simple answers in response to their questions.
- Provide preschoolers with opportunities to express themselves creatively, to make discoveries, and to solve problems.
- Give them freedom to explore, touch, manipulate, and find out about their environment.
- Allow plenty of time for them to complete activities without rushing.
- Give them freedom to talk, ask questions, express ideas, and be noisy.
- Provide plenty of space in which they can move, play, and build.

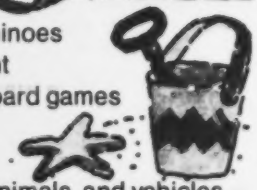
Toys for Preschoolers Preschool children like to pretend, build, make things, climb, jump, and manipulate things. The following are examples of good toys for preschoolers:

Washable dolls with a few clothes
Doll accessories
Child sized table and chairs
Mirror
Sand, water, and play dough
Wooden letters or numbers
Thick crayons, pencils, and chalk
Cash register and play money
Chalkboard
Felt markers, hole punch, stapler

Building blocks
Toys which stack or fit together
Finger puppets
Wheeled toys of all types
Color and shape design materials

Record or tape player
Jump rope
Rollerskates, ice skates
Props for building roads and towns
Outdoor games such as frisbee, tetherball
Bicycle
Blunt scissors

Hand puppets
Picture lotto or dominoes
Climbing equipment
Simple card and board games
Construction sets



Rubber balls
Miniature people, animals, and vehicles
Science materials, such as magnets, magnifying glass, flashlight
Dress-up clothes
Dishes, pots, pans
Large, plain paper
Small objects to sort
Water and sand toys
Bean bags
Puzzles, pegboards
Paintbrushes
Musical instruments

Sewing yarn, big needles, looms, beads

How Parents Can Guide Their Preschool Children's Play

Although it is important for children to feel free to experiment and be creative, play time should not be chaotic. Parents need to provide some guidance for their preschoolers' play. The following suggestions can help make your children's play not only enjoyable but also a time for learning:

- Watch your children at play. This is the best way to get to know about their favorite playmates, playthings, and interests.
- Encourage your children to make believe. Supply them with items such as unwanted clothes and other props for dress-up and pretending.
- Encourage your children to talk about their play. You might say, "Tell me more about the game you were playing with Jimmy. It looked like fun."
- Provide a variety of play materials. Children do not need expensive games or toys. Give them items such as empty spools, cardboard tubes, empty boxes, egg cartons, scrap paper, and old clothes.
- Allow adequate time for play. Parents need to make sure their children have time to play with others, especially their own friends. Children also need time to play alone so they may learn how to amuse themselves.
- Check playthings for safety. Be sure that indoor and outdoor toys and play equipment are safe.
- Keep play materials orderly. A cluttered play area is not inviting to children. Involve them in keeping it orderly when they have finished playing. Help them put away their toys. Having to clean up alone discourages them from playing.
- Do not pressure children to participate in play activities. Sometimes children are not ready for certain activities. Let them decide what they are going to play.
- Be available. Children often like parents' attention and approval when they are playing. They frequently say, "Look at me," or "Watch this." As often as possible, parents should try to give the attention or approval requested.

Reading to Preschoolers Reading to preschoolers helps them become aware of the correct use of language. It also helps them learn new words and their meanings, develop new understanding, and think creatively. Children ages three to five enjoy short, simple, action stories about children, animals, things that move such as trains and planes, and funny situations. They also like nonsense folk tales. The following are some suggestions for reading to preschoolers:

- Read to them every day in a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere.
- Have a large, varied supply of books on hand for them to use. Take them to the library to help select many of these books.
- Select books which have simple stories, a few familiar characters, repeated actions or behavior, repeated words or phrases with good rhythm, and a simple ending. The pictures should have adequate details and match the words and mood of the story. No ethnic, racial, or sex role stereotypes should be depicted.
- Even after children have learned to read, continue reading to them.

CHAPTER 2

CHILD CARE, PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS, HEALTH, AND SPECIAL SERVICES

CHOOSING QUALITY CHILD CARE

Child care should be selected very carefully. In thinking about child care, parents should consider the kind of care that best suits their children, the types of care available and their locations, the days and number of hours care will be needed, and the cost. The most important consideration, however, is the quality of the child care.

Caregivers for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Persons who provide care for young children have responsibility for keeping them safe, clean, and healthy, providing nourishing and adequate food, providing appropriate experiences to help them learn, and caring for their social and emotional needs. Caregivers should be expected to do the following:

- Enjoy working with young children and give them much individual attention and affection
- Understand how young children learn and grow and help them learn new skills
- Respond promptly to children's needs for food, intellectual stimulation, comfort, play, and exercise
- Speak gently to children and use praise and encouragement
- Show understanding and humor in responding to children's needs for independence and reassurance

- Have realistic limits for children's behavior
- Avoid using harsh punishment, shame, or ridicule to control children's behavior
- Establish daily routines for activities, upon which children can depend
- Let children explore their surroundings without constant interference from adults
- Be responsive to parents' goals for and concerns about their children

Child Care in Your Home

If parents decide to employ a caregiver who will come into their home, they will need to obtain the names of qualified persons from sources such as friends, relatives, employment agencies, and newspaper advertisements. A thorough check of the references and a careful interview of each applicant is essential. In considering these applicants,

parents should take into account their background, training, experience, characteristics, and abilities.

After a caregiver has been selected, parents should familiarize that person with the children, their routines, and their home. Parents also should leave emergency telephone numbers for themselves, for other responsible adults, and for the children's physician, the police, and the fire department.

Child Care Outside The Home

A variety of public and private child care programs are available in most communities. Parents may obtain information about these programs from their local school divisions, other parents, churches, community centers, departments of education at local colleges and universities, pediatricians, and family health and guidance clinics. An essential first step in selecting a good program is to visit those programs which have been recommended to you. Parents should observe the children already in the program to see if they seem happy, well-cared for, and involved in activities.

Information about the abilities of persons who give care to young children has been provided in *Caregivers for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers,* page 27 of this booklet. In addition to those abilities, teachers in preschool programs should be trained in early childhood education or have supervised experience working with young children.

Preschool Programs in Virginia

Preschool programs in Virginia vary in their purposes, length of day, program content, and whether they are private or public. Private programs, which may be profit or nonprofit, are financed by fees paid by parents and/or by the sponsoring agency. Public programs are financed by local or federal funds and are provided at no cost to parents.

Programs provided no longer than three hours per day are not licensed by any state agency. They must, however, meet local fire, health, and safety regulations. Programs which provide child care longer than three hours per day and those which offer occasional or drop-in care must be licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services, unless they are sponsored by a university, college, or religious organization. Public programs must meet the standards set by the agency or school division through which they are funded.

Nursery Schools and Child Development Programs These programs provide a variety of educational experiences, with emphasis upon play activities, for children ages two and a half to five. Most of these programs offer half-day sessions two to five days a week. Although some are sponsored by universities or religious organizations, most are privately operated.

Costs Generally the cost to parents for these programs ranges from approximately $40 for a two-day program to $65 for a five-day program. In some cases scholarships are available for children who qualify.

Licensing Because of their short school day, most programs of this kind do not have to be licensed, but they are reviewed annually for compliance with health, fire, and safety standards.

Early Childhood Programs In some localities early childhood programs are offered in the public schools. These programs are funded by federal funds or by the school division and must meet standards established by the agency providing the funding. The focus of these programs is upon the total development of children. Parents may contact their local elementary schools or the office of the division superintendent to find out if these programs are offered in their locality.

Costs No cost to parents

Selecting a Preschool Program

In selecting a preschool program, parents should look for one which provides the following:

Program

- ☐ A balance between active and quiet and organized and free play activities
- ☐ Opportunities for children to choose activities which interest them
- ☐ Opportunities for children to develop self-help skills, such as dressing, toileting, resting, washing, and eating
- ☐ Appropriate and adequate toys, books, materials, and climbing equipment
- ☐ Activities in science, art, music, language, health, numbers, and social studies
- ☐ Surroundings which are inviting to young children

Physical Facilities

- ☐ Adequate indoor and outdoor space where children may easily be seen. A minimum of 35 square feet indoors and 50 square feet per child outdoors is essential.
- ☐ Space for running and for large muscle activities
- ☐ A place where injured or sick children may rest
- ☐ A place for children to engage in quiet activities

Health and Safety Standards

- ☐ Equipment which is safe and in good condition, and clean, well-lighted, properly ventilated rooms, including clean toilets and sinks
- ☐ Nutritious meals or snacks served at appropriate times
- ☐ Hand washing before eating and after toileting
- ☐ Up-to-date medical records and emergency forms for all children
- ☐ First-aid equipment and at least one staff member trained in first aid
- ☐ Locked cabinets for medication and toxic materials
- ☐ A system for notifying parents if children become sick or injured in school
- ☐ Working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers
- ☐ Emergency information posted by the telephone

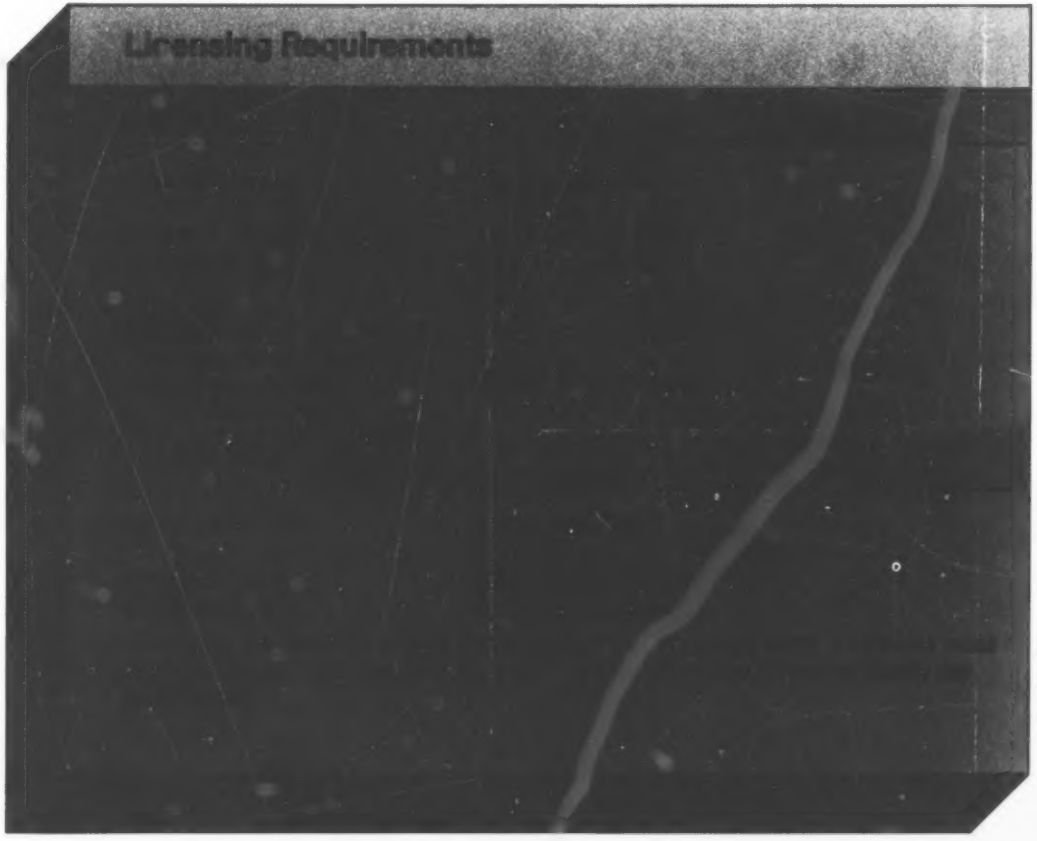
Relationships with Parents

- ☐ Opportunities for parent involvement in the program
- ☐ Parent education, including individual conferences, home visits, and parent meetings.

Day Care and Child Care Programs Day care programs, also known as child care programs, are usually located at centers and are full-day programs for children between the ages of two and a half to five. Some also serve infants and provide care before and after school for elementary school children. These programs are open about 10 to 12 hours per day, usually from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The hours, however, vary, and children may attend all or part of the day.

Many day care programs provide educational experiences in addition to physical care for children. Because children are in the program much of the day, careful attention must be given to their nutrition and physical well-being. Snacks and a well-balanced lunch are served, and in some programs breakfast is available. Children also have a quiet rest period daily. Before children are allowed to enter these programs, parents must furnish a certificate from a physician stating the dates on which their children were successfully immunized against diptheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), poliomyelitis, measles (rubeola), german measles (rubella), and mumps.

Care for children also is available at family day care homes in which persons care for children in their own homes. Many parents prefer the homelike atmosphere of family day care homes, especially for infants and toddlers. Homes used for this purpose should have special areas for the children to play, including a fenced-in yard. Proof of successful immunization against diptheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, German measles, and mumps is required for children attending these programs. These programs provide full-day services to preschool children.



Costs Costs for day care programs usually range from $55 to $120 per week. Family day care is usually less expensive than center-based day care and ranges from $40 to $100 per week.

Licensing Day care programs and family day care homes must be licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services.

Headstart Programs These are public preschool programs for economically disadvantaged children who are three to five years of age to help them succeed in elementary school and beyond. The programs focus on all aspects of children's development and usually are held five days a week during the school year. Headstart programs are generally located in public elementary schools and provide education and other services to children and their families.

All staff members are trained in child development and in techniques to help these children achieve, and each teacher is responsible for teaching only a small number of children. If programs have many bilingual children, at least one teacher or aide must speak the children's native language. Health services are part of the Headstart program, too, and the services of a psychologist are available to consult and counsel with the teachers and parents. Social workers and social service aides help families of Headstart children with problems and emergencies related to food, clothing, housing, and other matters.

Each day they are in school, headstart children are served at least one hot meal and a snack prepared by trained nutritionists. Nutritionists also help parents select healthy foods, prepare well-balanced meals, and obtain food stamps and other related assistance, when needed.

Because parents have the greatest influence on children's development, they participate in classes and workshops on child development to learn about the needs of their children and how to help them learn at home. Parents also help in the classroom and sometimes serve as paid aides for teachers and social service staff.

Costs No cost to parents.

Licensing Headstart programs are supported by federal grants and are locally administered by public school divisions, Community Action Agencies, and other nonprofit organizations. Performance standards, developed in 1975, require that every Headstart program provide the services described in this booklet.

Extended Day Care Programs In some localities public schools offer extended day care programs for children whose mothers are employed outside the home. This allows parents to bring their children to school as early as 7:00 a.m. and pick them up as late as 6:00 p.m. Because the children usually are already in their school buildings, they can leave the program to go directly to class

in the morning and return to the program at the end of classes in the afternoon. Parents generally must pay a fee on a sliding scale for this program. For information about the availability of extended day care programs in your community, parents should contact their local elementary school.

Costs Vary.

Programs for Preschool Handicapped Children Virginia law requires that a free and appropriate public education and related services be provided in the least restrictive environment for handicapped children between the ages of two and 21. All public school divisions must provide each identified handicapped child with an education especially designed to meet his or her needs and related services necessary for learning. Such services may include social work services, psychological services, counseling, occupational and physical therapy, speech-language therapy, transportation, and other services. The staff for these programs includes preschool teachers especially trained to work with handicapped children, as well as aides and other professionals.

Some programs for preschool handicapped children are conducted at centers, while others are home-based. In the center-based programs the children go to the centers and participate in learning experiences with other children. In the home-based programs, teachers and therapists go into the children's homes to work with them and their families.

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for learning is developed for each child in a preschool handicapped program. This IEP is planned by the child's parents, teachers, and other program staff members. It includes information about the child's present skills and abilities, educational goals and learning objectives, the kind and amount of special education and services the child will receive, and when and how to determine whether the child has accomplished what was planned.

The IEP of every child in a special education program is reviewed each year and changed so that the child may receive the education and services which will be most helpful. Parents must receive written notification of any meeting regarding the development or review of their children's IEP's and are encouraged to participate in these meetings. Parents also have the right to see all information maintained by the school division about their children.

Costs No cost to parents.

Early Intervention Programs Although all babies are special, some babies need special help in order to learn and grow. Early Intervention Programs are available in many communities in Virginia at no cost to parents for families of babies with special needs, such as minor developmental problems, handicaps, or medical problems which may cause delays in their development. The programs provide services for the infants and help their families to be more skilled in teaching them and caring for them. Early Intervention Programs also help families with the problems that may come with having a child with special needs.

Parents who suspect their baby is having problems in development can contact the Early Intervention Program in their community directly or may wish to discuss their concerns first with their family physican or pediatrician. Referrals for services can be made by parents, physicians, and public health, social service, and mental health agencies, and by hospitals and public schools.

Many kinds of infant specialists may work with parents and babies in an Early Intervention Program. Many programs use a team approach in which teachers, nurses, therapists, parents, and other specialists work together to find out what a baby can already do and to plan an individualized program to help him or her learn and grow.

Programs for infants may be home based, with a specialist who will work with babies and families in their own homes. Other programs bring children and their parents to their own center, and some programs are both home and center based. Parents play an important part in the program by helping to plan their babies' individualized programs. Many programs offer families a time to meet with other parents to share ideas and information and to talk about their concerns. Most Early Intervention Programs will suggest ways of teaching, playing with, and caring for babies.

When children no longer need an Early Intervention Program or become two years old, Early Intervention Programs help parents make other plans for their children. For children who need a special program, all public schools in Virginia provide special preschool programs for handicapped children who are two by September 30 of each school year. The Early Intervention Program may refer

such children, with parents' permission, to the local public schools. Other children will not need special help, and will go to nursery schools, to day care centers, or will be at home with their families. Some Early Intervention and public school programs may offer "check-ups" or "rescreenings" to make sure children continue to do well.

These programs are provided in many communities throughout the state by a community service board, by a private, nonprofit agency, or in a hospital. Parents may contact the Prevention Information and Training Office of the Virginia Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation for a list of Early Intervention Programs in their locality.

Costs No cost to parents.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP CHILDREN MAINTAIN GOOD PHYSICAL HEALTH

Children's physical health is important to their growth and learning. Parents can help children by teaching them good health habits, providing appropriate medical and dental care, and maintaining a family lifestyle conducive to healthy growth and development.

Nutrition Growing children need to eat three nutritious meals each day, including a substantial breakfast. Their daily diet should consist of a balance of fruits, raw and cooked vegetables, meat, poultry, fish or eggs, milk and milk products, bread, and cereal. Foods high in sugar, such as candy and soft drinks, should be allowed only occasionally. Developing healthy eating habits during childhood sets the pattern for eating habits in later years.

Sleep and Rest Adequate sleep and rest are necessary for good health and learning. Children who do not get enough sleep and rest have difficulty concentrating on their school work, become easily upset and irritable, and are unable to cope well in school. In addition, they are more likely to get sick frequently. Parents should insist that children go to bed every night at a time which will enable them to get sufficient sleep. Most children require about eight hours of sleep each night. Many young children also need a brief rest period during the day.

Exercise Daily exercise is also important for maintaining good health and promoting children's healthy physical and mental development. Furthermore, adequate exercise helps prevent obesity and chronic illness later in life.

Immunizations Periodic immunizations are essential for all children. The following chart shows the recommended immunizations for children from birth to age five and when these should be given by children's physicians or local health departments.

Health Services

The Virginia Department of Health offers a wide range of services related to children's health. The services are provided by 118 local health departments which receive technical assistance from the Bureau and Divisions of Maternal and Child Health, Crippled Children's Services, Family Planning, Dental Health, Public Health Nutrition (WIC), Public Health Nursing, and Immunization and Communicable Disease Control. These health services include the following:

- *Genetic testing, counseling, education, treatment, and food supplements* for specific inborn errors of metabolism are provided. Screening newborns for genetic problems, maple syrup urine disease, and hearing loss also is provided.
- *Child health services* in local health departments include primary health care services, physical examinations, immunizations, screening for hearing and vision loss, measuring growth and development, screening for anemia, lead toxicity, genetic disorders, sickle cell anemia, and other blood diseases. Health education efforts include counseling in nutrition, growth and development, injury prevention and home safety, distribution of syrup of ipecac and signs and symptoms of illness. Some health departments provide treatment of minor acute illnesses. Home visits are made to infants and children who are considered to be at high risk because of medical, social, or environmental factors.
- *Referrals* are made to Genetic Services, Crippled Children's or Child Development Clinics, and Child Protective Services, as needed.
- *The Local Health Departments* assist school divisions in school health services. These services include school entrance physical examinations, assessments for special education eligibility determination, vision and hearing testing, control of communicable diseases, and management of handicapped children with special medical needs.
- *The Child Development Clinic* network includes thirteen clinics funded and operated by the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health. They provide interdisciplinary team assessments by pediatricians, social workers, psychologists, nurses and education consultants for children with suspected developmental or behavioral disorders. Education consultants are funded by the Virginia Department of Education. The clinics provide intervention, counseling, and follow-up services on a short-term basis. The clinics coordinate services with schools, health departments, primary physicians, social services, infant intervention programs and mental health service providers for children with special needs. The Child Development Clinics provide assistance in Child Find activities and report children with handicapping conditions to the school divisions.
- *The Childhood Injury Prevention Program* through local health departments, poison centers, and relevant agencies promotes intervention programs directed toward children, adolescents, and parents by encouraging the distribution of infant car

seats, syrup of ipecac distribution, and the publication of "For Kids' Sake."

- *Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention* includes screening, community education, management of medically indigent children, and the identification and reduction of lead hazards in the environment. Comprehensive developmental assessments are obtained through the Child Development Clinics and other providers to determine the presence and severity of neurodevelopmental problems, and thus the need for special education services.
- *Crippled Childrens' Services* provide diagnostic and treatment services through the following programs: Amputee, Cardiology, Cerebral Palsy, Cleft Lip/Palate/Facial Deformities, Cystic Fibrosis, Endocrinology, Eye Surgery, Hearing Impairment, Hemophilia, Neurology, Neurosurgery, Orthopedics, Plastic Surgery, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Sickle Cell Anemia, Scoliosis, Spina Bifida, Surgery and Urology. Services to enrolled children may include hospitalization, physical care, laboratory tests, drugs, speech therapy, physical therapy, and speech ancillary services.
- *WIC Program* (Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children). The WIC Program provides supplemental food to pregnant, postpartum, and breast feeding women, and to children up to age five who meet medical and income eligibility requirements.
- *Dental Clinic Services* include diagnosis, prevention, education, and treatment as needed, primarily for children.

Costs Medical services are free of charge to persons who are deemed medically indigent. For other persons services are provided at prescribed charges according to a sliding fee scale within the limitations of available funds. Screening and educational components are free of charge. For additional information, contact your local health department.

WHERE TO GET HELP IF PROBLEMS ARISE

Difficult problems sometimes arise for which children and parents need help. Parents may be unaware of the many services which can provide needed help at little or no cost. A network of information and referral services has been established in Virginia to provide information about these services. When you have serious concerns or problems, you may telephone the nearest center to find out where and how to get the help you need. If the call is long distance, you may call collect.

The centers provide information about medical, dental, and mental health services, social services, family guidance clinics, day care centers, transportation providers, food stamps, emergency and public housing services, programs for handicapped, nursing care, residential care for children, employment services, consumer advocacy groups, and many other types of services. In addition, the centers will help make the referral to the services you need if you have difficulty doing so. The following is a list of these information and referral centers:

Human Services Information and Referral, Alexandria (703) 838-4357

Citizens' Assistance and Information, Arlington (703) 558-2105

United Way
Charlottesville (804) 971-1903

Information and Referral Services of Southwestern Virginia, (703) 982-2345

Information and Referral Center of Central Virginia, (804) 845-8016

United Way of Greater Richmond
(804) ASK-2000

Information Center of Hampton Roads
(804) 625-4543

Information and Referral Service of Waynesboro, Staunton, and Augusta County, (703) 943-1010 or Enterprise-0323

Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Area "Listening Ear"
(703) 434-2528

Helpline Information Referral—RARA
Lexington-Rockbridge County
(703) 463-6642

United Way Information and Referral
Staunton and Western Augusta County
(703) 885-1220

Information about exceptional children (handicapped and gifted) may be obtained from the Council for Exceptional Children, (703) 620-3660.

CHAPTER 8

PREPARING FOR ELEMENTARY

STARTING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

As children approach the age of five, parents begin the process of preparing them to enter elementary school. There are many factors to consider, such as children's readiness for kindergarten and how to help them make the change from home and preschool programs to elementary school. The following sections provide information about starting elementary school, including entrance age, readiness for kindergarten, and how to prepare children to start school successfully.

Entrance Age Although parents may choose to educate their children at home, most parents prefer sending their children to school. Beginning in 1988, children must be five years old on or before September 30, to enter kindergarten. Parents of children whose birthdays are in October, November, and December may request that their children enter school. In such cases children will be tested to decide if they are ready for school. The test or tests used for this purpose will be designated by the Virginia Board of Education and will be given by local school personnel. The division superintendent will decide whether these children will be enrolled in school or will have to wait a year.

RECORDS REQUIRED FOR ENROLLING CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Certificate of Birth Before children are enrolled in public school in Virginia, parents or guardians must show their children's birth certificates or other acceptable documents, such as a baptismal certificate. The application for a birth certificate must include the child's name, date and place of birth, and the full name of the mother, including her maiden name. A check or money order in the amount of $3.00 must accompany the application. Cash or stamps are not acceptable. Birth certificates for children born in Virginia

may be obtained by applying to:

Bureau of Vital Records
Virginia Health Department
Second Floor, Madison Building
109 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Birth certificates for children born outside of Virginia may be obtained by contacting the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state where they were born.

Report of Physical Examination Virginia law requires that, in order for children to be admitted to school for the first time, a report of a complete physical examination from a licensed physician, or records which show that such a report is available, must be presented. This physical examination must be given within the year before the child enters school. Parents who do not have a physician for their children may contact their local health department to arrange for an examination.

Immunization Certificate Before children are admitted to school for the first time, parents are required to submit a certificate from a licensed physician stating the dates on which their children were successfully immunized against each of these diseases:

- Diptheria,
- Tetanus,
- Pertussis (whooping cough—before age of one year),
- Poliomyelitis,
- Measles (rubeola),
- German measles (rubella) and
- Mumps (before the age of two years).

Additional Health Information Parents should be prepared to discuss with school personnel any special health needs children may have for which the school will have to make special provisions and any other information which may be helpful to the school for meeting the health needs of children.

READINESS FOR KINDERGARTEN

Because children mature at different rates, some are ready for school a little earlier or later than others of the same age. Parents sometimes have difficulty deciding whether or not to enroll children in kindergarten before the age at which they are required to attend school. The following is a list which describes important characteristics and abilities needed by five-year-olds to get along well in school. *Before enrolling children, parents should carefully consider whether the majority of these characteristics and abilities are true of their children most of the time.*

If your children show *most* of these characteristics and abilities most of the time, they are probably ready for school. However, if they do not show most of these characteristics and abilities *most of the time,* the decision to delay entering them in school may be advisable. Entering children in school at the right time in their development increases the likelihood of their succeeding in their studies and enjoying school. The principals at the elementary schools your children will attend can help you determine the best time for your children to start school. They also will offer suggestions you may use to help your children prepare for and do well in school.

Characteristics and Abilities Showing Children's Readiness for Kindergarten

- ☐ Enjoys being with others
- ☐ Is able to follow simple rules for getting along with others
- ☐ Is able to take turns and cooperate in a group
- ☐ Is able to share an adult's attention with other children
- ☐ Is able to stay in an activity 15 or 20 minutes
- ☐ Understands and observes the property rights of others
- ☐ Feels comfortable being away from parent or child care provider for short periods
- ☐ Is able to cope with minor disappointments
- ☐ Can follow a short sequence of simple directions
- ☐ Is able to express self clearly in speaking
- ☐ Is able to tell own full name, address, and telephone number
- ☐ Asks questions to get information
- ☐ Understands simple ideas, such as big and small, up and down, above and below
- ☐ Can tell how common objects are used
- ☐ Understands some number ideas, such as one hat and two crayons
- ☐ Is able to tell about own experiences
- ☐ Enjoys listening to stories
- ☐ Is able to identify objects which have particular uses, such as things to wear, things to eat
- ☐ Discusses stories told or television programs viewed
- ☐ Identifies familiar objects at home
- ☐ Identifies some colors
- ☐ Identifies sounds in own environment, such as a dog barking or a horn blowing
- ☐ Takes care of personal property
- ☐ Feeds self using fork and spoon
- ☐ Uses the toilet without assistance from others
- ☐ Is able to put on a coat without help
- ☐ Sits still for brief periods of time
- ☐ Puts toys away when asked
- ☐ Draws simple figures
- ☐ Is able to copy a circle and a square
- ☐ Is able to hop on one foot two or more times in a row
- ☐ Is able to catch a large bouncing ball
- ☐ Is able to run and stop on a signal

PREPARING CHILDREN TO ENTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Some children have attended nursery schools or day care centers and have had experience being away from home with teachers and other children. For others, going to elementary school may be the first time they are away from home consistently. Most young children look forward to starting school, but, at the same time, often feel anxious about what may lie ahead.

Your children's teachers are aware of these feelings and will help them get acquainted and feel comfortable in school. Nevertheless, parents should prepare children for entering and adapting successfully to school. The following are some suggestions for helping children enter and adapt to school.

- Talk with your children about school, what they will learn, the friends they will make, and what they may expect. Discuss what the school day will be like. Talk about learning as an exciting and enjoyable activity.
- Take your children on a visit to the school they will attend so they may see what it is like. Visit the kindergarten classes and show them the cafeteria, library, playground, restrooms, and other areas of the school.
- Have your children meet the principal, kindergarten teachers, and counselors.

- Play games with your children about being in school.
- Read stories to them about children in school. You may ask your local librarian for help in selecting these stories.
- Explain some of the rules they will be expected to follow in school.
- Encourage your children to draw or paint pictures about themselves attending school. Ask them to talk about these pictures to you and to describe how they feel about going to school. Respond with understanding to their feelings about starting school, and answer questions they may have.
- Use puppets to play with your children so they may dramatize how they feel about starting school. Discuss with them any fears they may have about school. Assure them that such feelings are natural and will disappear soon after they start school. Help them to see school as an enjoyable experience.

- Help your children to accept others who are different from them, such as people of different cultures, races, and religions as well as those with handicaps. Learning to accept others will help them get along better in school.
- Through play activities teach them how to get ready for school on time. Part of this play might include choosing and laying out school clothes before going to bed at night.
- If your children must go to some place other than home at the end of the school day, make sure that they understand this. Before school opens, provide opportunities for them to become accustomed to this setting and the people there.

CHILDREN'S SAFETY

Teachers, principals, and other school personnel place the safety and well-being of children above other considerations and emphasize good safety habits in working with them. Even after children start school, however, parents have primary responsibility for helping children learn and use good safety rules.

Whether they will walk or ride, children about to begin school should be taught by their parents how to get to and from school safely. In beginning this process, parents should be sure that children know their full names, addresses, telephone numbers, and their parents' names.

Walking To School Safely If your children will be walking to and from school, begin practicing this walk with them several weeks before school opens. Each time you walk the route together, point out landmarks for them to follow so they will not get lost when they walk without you. Also, note the length of time it takes to get to or from school. During these practice walks, teach your children to do the following:

- Walk with one or more other children on the way to and from school.
- Leave home on time to get to school without rushing. Rushing can result in accidents.
- Stay on the route which has been established.
- Observe traffic lights and signs.
- Cross streets only at corners and crosswalks, and look in both directions before crossing.
- Obey all crossing guards and school safety patrol members.
- Wherever possible, walk on the sidewalks.
- Where no sidewalks are available, walk on the left side of the road facing traffic, and as far away from the traffic as possible.
- Walk no more than two abreast on sidewalks and single-file where there are no sidewalks.
- Go directly to school in the morning and directly home after school.
- Watch for turning cars and cars coming out of driveways.

- Do *not* talk with strangers. Never tell a stranger your name, address, or parent's name.
- *Never* get into a car with strangers, no matter what they may say, unless you get your parents' permission.
- Call for help and run away as fast as you can if someone tries to hurt you.

Parents or another responsible adult should walk to and from school with children the first few days of school. This additional practice can help them to develop the safety habits and self-confidence for walking with other children. Then arrange for them to walk with others; a young child walking alone is at risk.

Riding the Bus Safely If your children will be riding the school bus, begin practicing with them several days before school opens how to get to the bus stop and home again, and how to ride the school bus safely. Help them learn the following:

- Leave home on time.
- If possible, walk with other children to the bus stop.
- Go directly to the bus stop on the way to school.
- *Do not* talk with strangers or get into a car with them no matter what they may say.
- While waiting for the bus, stand back from the road and *do not* play in the road.
- Wait for the bus to stop completely before boarding.
- Check traffic in both directions before boarding.
- Cross the street or highway only when the bus driver signals.
- Cross in front of the bus so you can see the driver and the driver can see you.
- Form a single line for boarding and do *not* crowd or push.
- When entering the bus, watch your step and use the handrail.
- Remain seated while riding on the bus.
- Keep head, arms, and hands inside the bus at all times.
- When the bus is moving, do *not* talk to the driver except in an emergency.
- Talk quietly while on the bus. Be especially quiet at railroad crossings.
- Obey the bus driver's instructions immediately.

- Do *not* throw anything out of the bus windows.
- Do *not* damage the bus.
- When arriving at school in the morning or at the bus stop in the afternoon, remain seated until the bus comes to a full stop.
- Walk carefully off the bus, using the handrail and taking one step at a time, and away from the loading zone when arriving at school.
- To cross the road after leaving the bus, walk in front of the bus, never behind it.
- Stop and wait for the driver or safety patrol members to give a signal to cross.
- Check the traffic both ways before crossing the street or highway; do *not* run.
- If possible, walk home from the bus stop with other children.
- Come directly home from the bus stop after school.

The area around the school bus is called the "danger zone" because it is very difficult for the driver to see small children who are close to the bus. The first several days of school, go with your children to the bus stop in the morning and meet them there when they return after school. Be sure to observe their behavior at the bus stop. Talk with them about the safety rules they are using. Within a reasonable time, encourage them to go to and from the bus stop independently with other children.

Car-Pooling Safely Good safety rules are equally necessary when children are car-pooled to school. Drivers should, of course, observe all traffic regulations, drive with caution, and obey all school regulations concerning dropping off and picking up children on school property. Routes should be arranged so that children being picked up or dropped off are not required to cross traffic lanes to get to their schools or homes. Chil-

dren who are car pooled should be taught the following:

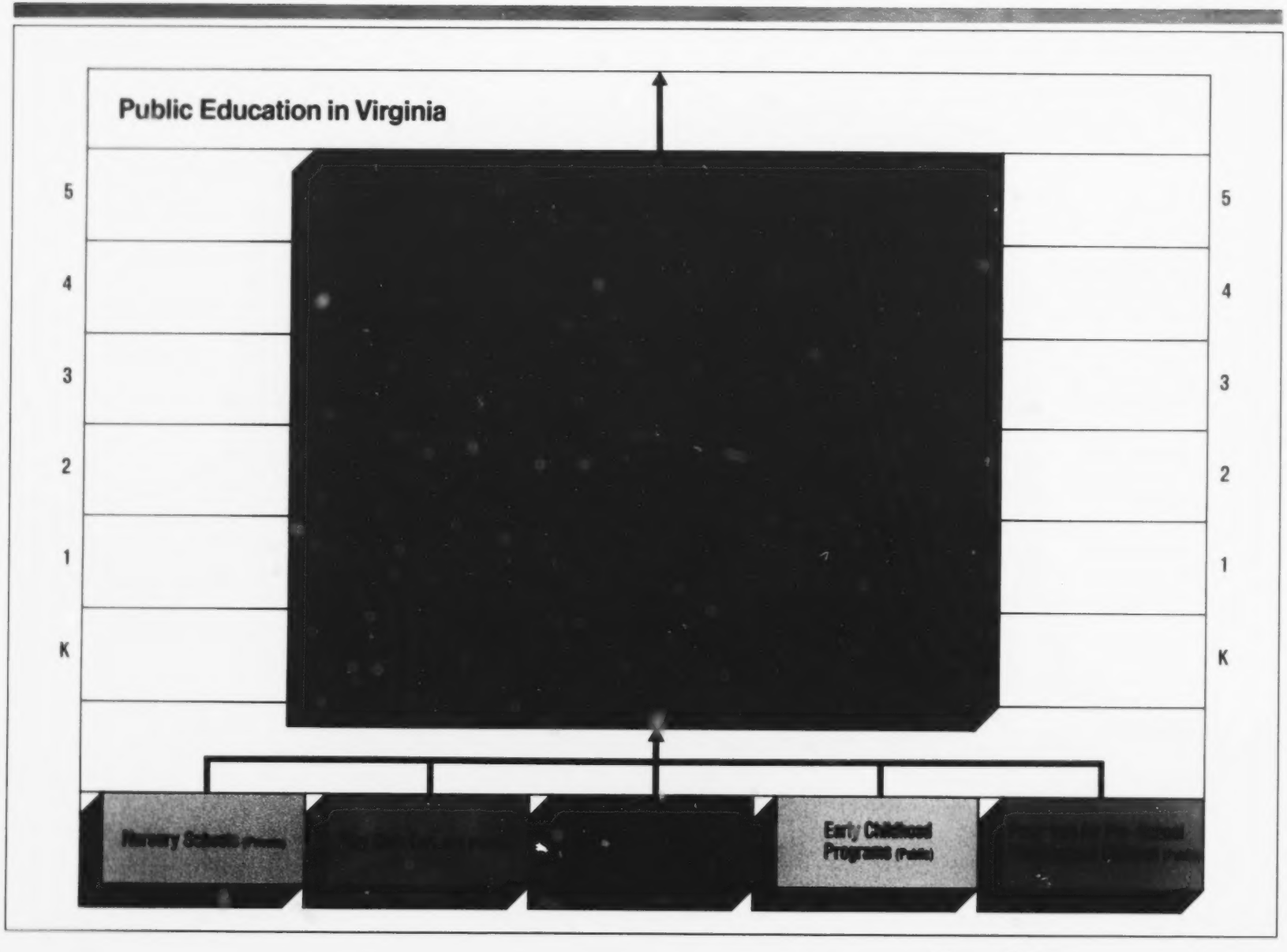
- Stay seated in the car, and wear a seat belt.
- Keep heads, arms, and hands inside the car.
- Speak softly so the driver is not distracted.
- Do *not* throw articles out of car windows.
- Before getting out of the car, wait until the car comes to a full stop and the driver gives permission.
- When getting out of the car at home or at school, use the door nearest the sidewalk.
- Look both ways for traffic before leaving the car.
- Go directly into school or home upon arrival there.

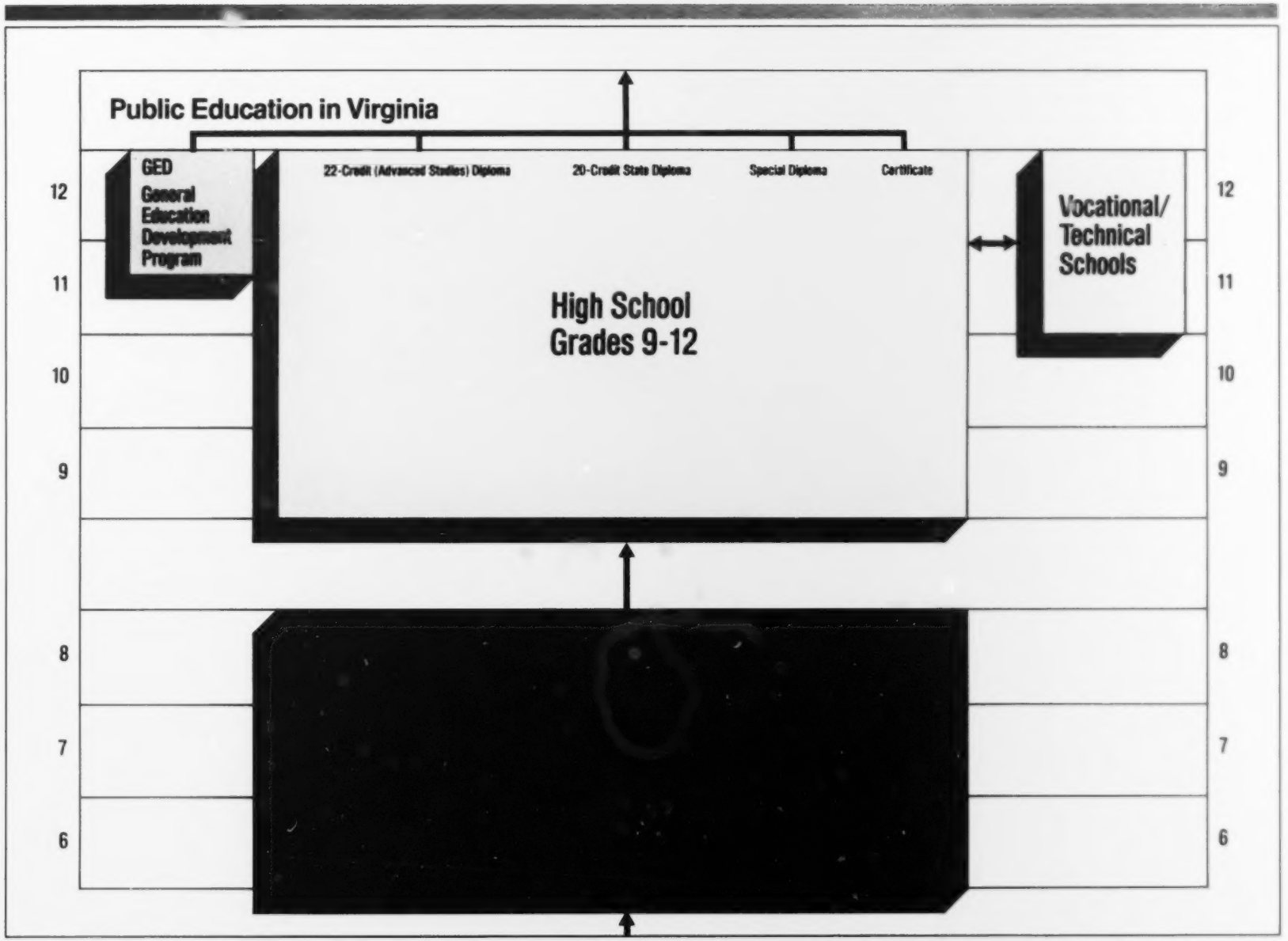
THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

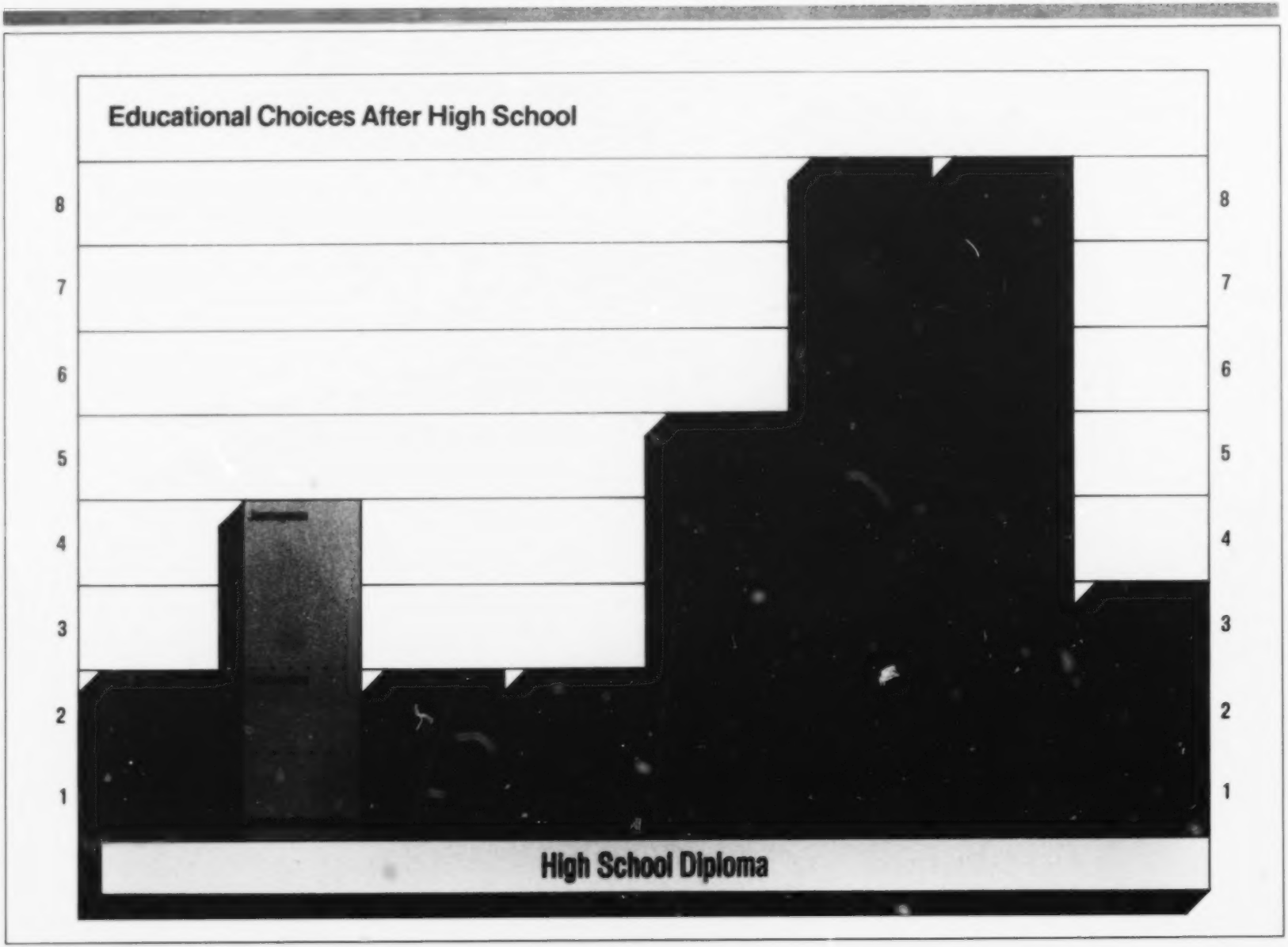
Although your children are very young, it is important to begin thinking about their future and how you will help them become effective, responsible, happy adults. Throughout their growing up years you will have the greatest influence upon them and will help them grow and learn in many ways. Through your example and teaching, they will acquire lasting behavior, beliefs, and attitudes about how to live their lives and what is important in life.

Among the most meaningful values parents can give children is a love of learning and a belief in the importance of education. When parents consistently show children over the years that they think education is important, children gradually acquire this belief, too. Parents can accomplish this by encouraging children to learn and do well in school, by being interested and involved in their children's education throughout the school years, and by encouraging them to continue their education after high school graduation.

The charts on the following pages of this booklet show public education in Virginia from preschool programs through the highest postgraduate and professional programs. These educational opportunities, along with financial aid for education programs after high school, are available to your children. Encourage them to take advantage of these opportunities and to become all they are capable of becoming.


Public Education in Virginia
5
4
3
2
1
K
5
4
3
2
1
K
Nursery Schools (Parent
Early Childhood Programs (Public)


Public Education in Virginia
GED
General
Education
Development
Program
22-Credit (Advanced Studies) Diploma
20-Credit State Diploma
Special Diploma
Certificate
Vocational/
Technical
Schools
High School
Grades 9-12
12
11
10
9
8
7
6


Educational Choices After High School
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
High School Diploma

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN VIRGINIA PUBLICATIONS

- **ABOUT THE PRESCHOOL YEARS, BOOK 1** For parents of young children who will serve as their children's first teachers and educational decision makers.

  Includes information about child development; childrearing techniques; helping young children grow and learn; preschool education; and public education in Virginia.

- **ABOUT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEARS, BOOK 2** For parents of children entering elementary school.

  Includes information about elementary school programs; school staff and services; studying and homework; child development; childrearing techniques; and helping children to be successful students.

- **ABOUT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS, BOOK 3** For students completing their final year in elementary school and for parents wanting to help them plan for middle school.

  Includes information about middle school programs; school staff and services; studying and homework; career exploration; early adolescent development; childrearing techniques; and helping middle school children to be successful students.

- **ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL, BOOK 4** For seventh-grade students and their parents for use in planning for high school.

  Includes information about high school programs; graduation requirements; diplomas; studying and homework; special programs and activities; careers; and helping high school students to succeed.

- **AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, BOOK 5** For high school juniors and their parents for use in planning for further education and careers after high school graduation.

  Includes information about Virginia's colleges and universities; community and two-year colleges; vocational-occupational programs; adult and continuing education; General Educational Development (GED) Program; military service; financial aid; careers; and sources of additional information.

Copies of these booklets are available for use at the following locations throughout Virginia: guidance offices and libraries at all public elementary, middle/junior high/intermediate, and high schools, and public libraries. Copies of Book 1 are being distributed through hospitals in Virginia to parents of new babies.

For information, please contact: Public Information Office
Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 6Q
Richmond, VA 23216